50TH SPACE WING

Schriever Air Force Base

by Staff Sergeant Steven Barwick

Where is Schriever Air Force Base? Falcon Air Force Base is still more familiar to many military members and civilian contractors, but Schriever is slowly catching on. It has been called Schriever AFB since the official name change in 1998, in honor of retired Gen Bernard A. Schriever, *the father of the United States Air Force's space and missile program.* Nevertheless, whether you know where Schriever AFB is or not, all of you have no doubt utilized our systems. If you've ever flown in a plane, or seen the Space Shuttle launch, Schriever AFB personnel are behind the scenes providing critical information from our satellite systems.

Being the newest base in the Air Force, its history doesn't go too far back. In 1981, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced a need for a military space systems control facility. The decision was made to build Falcon Air Station. The base was built as a back up to Onizuka AS in California where DoD satellites were being controlled.

Groundbreaking began in May 1983 and shortly afterward Falcon AS became reality. Five years later, after Falcon took primary control of the Air Force Satellite Control Network, it officially became Falcon AFB and continued to carry that name until the recent change.

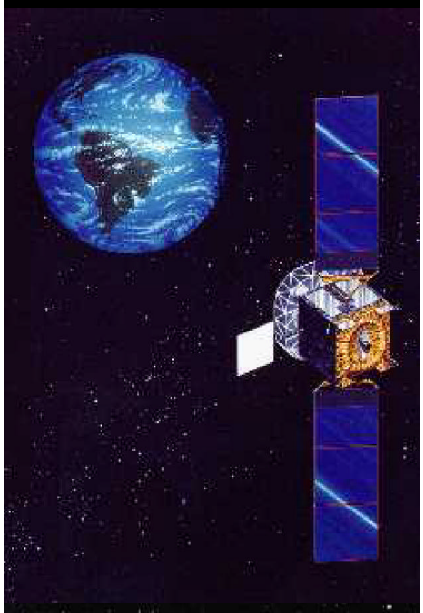
Schriever AFB is located in the heart of the Southern Colorado plains, where the *deer and the antelope play*. Even though it feels like a remote area, Schriever is only 12 miles away from one of the fastest growing cities in the US, beautiful Colorado Springs.

Schriever is a small base with approximately 3,800 military members, DoD civilians, and contractors on duty; but the mission is of utmost importance. The mission of the 50th Space Wing is to command and control operational DoD satellites and manage the worldwide AFSCN. The wing operates satellite operation centers at Schriever AFB, remote tracking stations, and other command and control facilities around the world. These facilities monitor satellites during launch, put satellites in their proper orbits following launch, operate the satellites while they are in orbit, and fix satellite anomalies as they occur.

The 50th Operations Group, the 50th Communications Group, and the 50th Support Group comprise the 50th SW, and they work closely together to go above and beyond mission requirements. The Financial Management office falls under the 50th Space Wing staff.

The 50th Operations Group commands and controls assigned operational DoD satellite systems, trains space operations crews, provides operational support and evaluation functions for management of satellite control centers and assigned ground stations.

The group is also responsible for the daily operation of the AFSCN. The network consists of eight subordinate tracking stations located in areas from Hawaii to England. There are nine squadrons that make up the



50th OG. They are the 1st Space Operations Squadron, 2nd SOPS, 3rd SOPS, 4th SOPS, 5th SOPS, 50th Operations Support Squadron, 21st Space Operations Squadron (located at Onizuka AFS CA), 22nd SOPS, and the 23rd SOPS (located at New Boston AFS NH).

The 1st Space Operations Squadron, located at Schriever AFB, is responsible for launch and early orbit operations, as well as anomaly resolution for the Defense Support Program (DSP) and Navstar Global Positioning System (GPS). They also conduct day-to-day operations for DSP. Finally, 1st SOPS is the lead squadron for capitalizing on the operational potential of several developmental satellites.

The 2nd Space Operations Squadron provides precise, three-dimensional position, velocity and timing information to military and civilian users around the globe by operating the Navstar Global Positioning System, the military's largest and the world's most widely-used satellite constellation. The squadron operates and maintains the Master Control Station at Schriever AFB and a worldwide network of GPS-dedicated ground antennas and monitoring stations to provide around-the-clock command and control of the 24-satellite constellation. Detachment 1, 2nd SOPS, located at Cape Canaveral AS FL, maintains a GPS ground antenna to support prelaunch compatibility testing of new GPS satellites and to support software and hardware testing for the constellation.

The 3rd Space Operations Squadron, also located at Schriever AFB, conducts day-to-day command and control for the Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS). It also conducts both launch and on-orbit operations for the Navy's Ultrahigh Frequency Follow-on Satellite Program.

The 4th Space Operations Squadron is located at Schriever AFB and is responsible for day-to-day command and control, communications payload management and ground segment maintenance for the joint service Milstar Satellite Program. The two-satellite constellation is controlled from two fixed Constellation Control Stations (CCCs) at Schriever AFB and three mobile CCSs garrisoned at Peterson and Offutt AFBs. Milstar provides assured, jam resistant and secure communications for all levels of command from the National Command Authorities all the way down to deployed tactical warfighters through all levels of conflict.

The 5th Space Operations Squadron is located at Onizuka AS CA and is responsible for day-to-day command and control for the DSCS III satellites and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization communications satellite program. The squadron has prime launch responsibility for DSCS III, NATO IV/Skynet IV, and the Inertial Upper Stage. The 5th SOPS is prime backup node for NATO IV/Skynet IV and DSP on-orbit operations. In addition, the squadron provides backup telemetry and commanding support to the Space Shuttle Control Center, various NASA programs, the Atlas, Titan, and Delta booster rockets.

The 50th Operations Support Squadron (OSS) is located at Schriever AFB and is responsible for implementing operations and training policy for seven squadrons. The squadron integrates new satellite and ground control programs into current operations, conducts Force Development Evaluation throughout the 50th Space Wing, and provides intelligence data to 50th Space Wing units. The 50th OSS also manages the $150 million Space Operations and Maintenance Contract.

The 21st Space Operations Squadron is the host unit at Onizuka AS, Sunnyvale CA, 37 miles southeast of San Francisco. The squadron supports Department of Defense assigned space missions by operating, maintaining, and providing logistical support for the common user resources of the Air Force Satellite Control Network. The 21st SOPS Commander is designated the installation commander for Onizuka AS.

The 22nd Space Operations Squadron, located at Schriever AFB, develops, publishes, and executes the network operations tasking order, as well as operates and maintains the worldwide remote tracking stations and associated communications systems comprising the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

The 23rd Space Operations Squadron is one of eight worldwide satellite command and control stations which consitute the Air Force Satellite Control Network. It also provides base support for New Boston Air Station.

Now that you are a little more familiar with the history, mission and responsibilities at Schriever, you may have a better understanding of the challenge to the Financial Management personnel at the base. The Financial Management office at Schriever takes care of financial matters for Air Force installations at various locations across the globe. The 50 SW/FM mission is to provide expert management of financial resources, planning for future needs, and top-notch financial services to directly support the 50th SW's satellite operations and dedicated people. This can be nerve-racking at times because of varying time zones and communication gaps, but the team works through it by coming in earlier, or staying later. Adapting to the environment is how to succeed at Schriever.

Working without an Accounting Liaison Office located within the facility makes communication with Peterson AFBs ALO critical. This can be a difficult task at times due to the volume of information traffic that flows through the busy Peterson office. Teamwork is the best response to this challenge. Coordinating with one another to find out who can shuttle information to and from the ALO is an example of how the team closes the communications gap.

The problems Schriever face are similar Air Force-wide, but the Schriever finance personnel are able to work through them with the highest level of professionalism and equip the war fighter with the resources needed. The mission of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force depends on Schriever AFB accomplishmenting its mission and the men and women of Schriever will not let the Air Force down.